

but as importantly, you can do so by loving your neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself. If you want to fight evil, do some good. I also—one person cannot do everything in our society, of course. But one person can do something. And by that, I mean that we can change our country one person at a time—one person at a time. And that's what we've got to do, and that's what we have to think about.

And there's nothing more powerful in helping change the country than the faith—faith in *Dios*. I want to tell you, the greatest gift that people can give to a President or people in positions of responsibility—anybody else, for that matter—is prayer.

I work the ropelines a lot, and people say, "Mr. President, I pray for you and your family." I turn to them, I look them in the eye, and say, "That's the greatest gift you can give—the greatest gift you can give." I mean it with all sincerity.

And so I want to thank you for your prayer. I want to thank you for what you do for our Nation. I want to thank you for your good works. I want to thank you for helping change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

I believe that it will be said, it will be said of Americans such as yourself, "*Bien, siervo bueno y fiel.*"

It's my honor to be with you this morning. May God bless you and your ministries, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:07 a.m. in the Presidential Ballroom at the Capital Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Luis Cortes of Philadelphia, founder and president of Nueva Esperanza, Inc., a Hispanic faith-based community development corporation. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Gold Medal to Former President Ronald Reagan and Nancy Reagan

May 16, 2002

Thank you all very much. Ever since the American Revolution, our Congress has given gold medals to heroes of our Republic. Today I'm honored to join the Members of the Congress from both parties in paying tribute to Nancy and Ronald Reagan as they receive this high award, the Congressional Gold Medal, in recognition of their contributions to America and to the cause of freedom.

Mrs. Reagan, it's great to see you again. It's always a pleasure to be with you.

I want to thank our Secretary of State, Colin Powell, for joining us today; Mr. Secretary, thank you for coming. I appreciate the justices from our courts being here. I particularly want to thank the Members of Congress, Mr. Speaker and Senator Byrd

and all the Members of the Congress who are here.

I want to welcome all the friends of President and Mrs. Reagan. All of you all who work in the Reagan administration, welcome back to your old stomping grounds.

Ronald Reagan is one of the largest figures of our time. His name will always stand for courage and consistency, for patriotism and resolve, and for humor and optimism. He's a man of great talent and great character. Yet, his entire career is a tribute to the power of great ideas.

President Reagan believed deeply in American character and destiny. He believed deeply in the power of freedom to improve the lives of average men and

women. These ideas changed America, and they changed the world, not only because he eloquently explained them, because they are right and they are true. Ronald Reagan believed that prosperity is another—another name for economic freedom, and his policies of freedom laid the foundations for a prosperous and for a generous society.

Ronald Reagan believed that history is on the side of human liberty, that all tyranny must be temporary, because liberty is the universal hope of all mankind. He believed that the aspirations of our country require the might of our military. And he knew that the cause of freedom is served by moral clarity, a willingness to call oppression and evil by their proper names.

Above all, Ronald Reagan believed in the strong character of the American people, even when some on both the left and right were quite skeptical of that character. He would recognize the country we have seen since September the 11th. He would look at the spirit and sacrifice of the firefighters and police officers, the men and women of our military, average Americans, and he'd be proud. He wouldn't be surprised. He knew the courage and decency and generosity at the heart of this country because he shared it and he embodied it.

At every step of an amazing life, Nancy Reagan has been at Ronald Reagan's side—

right by his side. As his optimism inspired us, her love and devotion strengthened him. As first lady of California, Mrs. Reagan spoke out on behalf of POWs and American servicemen missing in action. As our First Lady of the United States, Nancy Reagan led an antidrug campaign that helped significantly reduce teen drug use. Now she has joined the fight against the terrible curse of Alzheimer's.

Ronald and Nancy Reagan were married in 1952, and their love for one another has only grown greater with the passage of time. They set out to make a life together, and this amazing partnership helped change the world. Now on a difficult journey, we admire Nancy Reagan's eloquent example of loyalty and love.

May God bless you and your husband, Mrs. Reagan. And may God bless this country he loves so much.

And now I'm honored to present the Gold Medal, along with the Speaker and Senator Byrd, President pro tempore.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. in the Rotunda at the Capitol. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of former First Lady Nancy Reagan.

## Statement on House of Representatives Action on Welfare Reform Legislation

*May 16, 2002*

Today the House passed welfare reform legislation that will help millions of Americans realize a life of hope, dignity, and independence. This compassionate approach builds upon our past successes by moving more Americans from welfare to work, encouraging strong families and healthy marriages, and freeing States to in-

novate as they help people find the independence of a job.

I commend the House for moving quickly and now urge the Senate to act on behalf of those who seek a better life.